CHECHNYA:
Urban Warfare Lessons Learned

Commonwealth of Independent States

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Why Chechnya Matters

"The future of war is not the son of Desert Storm, but the stepchild of Chechnya"

-General Krulak

- Largest urban battle since World War II
- Russia employed all aspects of military power in ubran environment

Background to the Conflict

- Chechnya is part of the Russian Federation
- Long history of resisting Russian control
- Began latest drive for independence in 1990

Grozny- Pre-War

50,000 people
100 square miles

High rises
Industrial areas
Suburbs

Grozny-Post-War

The Chechens

- Clan-based mountain people
- Long history of fighting Russian aggression
- Islamic
- Trader/dealer culture “adat”

Classic Soviet Mout Tactics

- Multiple directions
- Assault detachments
- Break-up enemy
- Seize key location
- Return later for block by block clearing

Order of Battle

Russians

38,000 men

230 tanks

454 ACVs

Chechens

15,000 men

50 tanks

100 ACVs

The Chechen Defense of Grozny

- Chechens planned for city defense for two years
- City manager and city engineer involved

- Intimate knowledge of streets, buildings, and strategic intersections

Initial Assault

- December 31, 1994
- City approached from East, West and North
- Light resistance for Northern Group
- Northern Group convoys to center of city at dusk
- Long armored columns, no supporting infantry

The Chechen Counter-attack

- Attacked at sundown
- Chechen drew Russian forces into city center
- Chechen scouts monitored progress through suburbs
- Russian forces panicked

Russians lost 102 of 120 APC and 20 of 26 tanks

Chechen Urban Tactics

- Fought as light 25 man highly mobile sub-teams
- Urban ambushes would rarely involve more then 75 fighters
- Would attack Russian units and break them into smaller pieces
- Owned the night
- Russian trained leadership

Chechen “Hugging”

- Stayed close to Russian infantry in urban areas, usually less then 25 meters
- Would rather take chances with infantry then suffer from Russian artillery or air

Chechen Infrastructure

- Relied heavily on stolen or captured Russian supplies: ex: railcar full of RPO-A Shmel rockets
- Every 8 man team had a Motorola hand-held radio
- Constructed extensive bunkers throughout the city

The National Weapon of Chechnya: The RPG

- Widely used throughout Grozny
- Two dedicated RPG gunners per 8 man team
- Disable first, then destroy
- Engaged armor with multiple weapons
- Effectiveness greatly increased in urban environment

Urban Sniping

- Widely used by both sides in Grozny
- Second most deadly urban weapon for the Chechens
- Used as scouts as much as for sniping
- Russians employed in support of infantry, Chechens also deployed independently
- Best source of tactical intelligence in urban area

Chechen Weaknesses

- Internal divisions hindered effort
- Could not conduct an extensive engagement
- Many part-time fighters
- Limited supplies of ammunition
- Could not replace large battlefield losses

Russian Combined Arms

STORM GROUP

- Motorized Infantry Company
- Tank Platoon
- Artillery Platoon
- Mortar Platoon
- AGS 17 Platoon
- Engineer Platoon
- Chemical Troops

Russian Infantry/Conscripts

- Basic fire and maneuver skills lacking
- NCO and junior officer leadership weak
- Many hid, ran, panicked or deserted

- Young, unhealthy, untrained
- Over 2/3 less then 6 months military experience
- Low Morale

Infantry Fighting Vehicles

- High attrition rates
- Many lost at point-blank ranges from RPGs and heavy machine guns
- Increased ammunition needs due to nature of urban warfare

Air Defense Vehicles

- High elevation weapons were excellent for urban combat
- 4-5,000 rounds per minute
- Excellent anti-sniper weapon

2S6

- Light armor proved vulnerable, became a prime target for Chechens

Russian Artillery

- Massed artillery used to devastate large areas of Grozny
- Used to compensate for poor infantry performance
- Russian Artillery units out-numbered maneuver units around Grozny

TOS-1 in Chechnya

- Mounted a T-72 Chassis
- 220mm Rocket Tubes
- Unguided
- 4 Warhead: Napalm, FAE, Thermobaric, thermite

Intelligence

- Limited accurate maps
- Underestimated threat
- Cultural arrogance
- Did not conduct proper reconnaissance of city
- Value of imagery limited

Rotary Wing

- Extremely vulnerable
- Employed weapons at stand-off range on city ring
- Would rarely venture into urban canyon for fear of attack
- Mainly used for logistic support

Airpower

- Hampered by poor weather
- Little direct-support of ground troops
- Used free fire zones: high civilian casualties

- Successfully Employed laser guided bombs against high value targets

Chechnya: Round 2

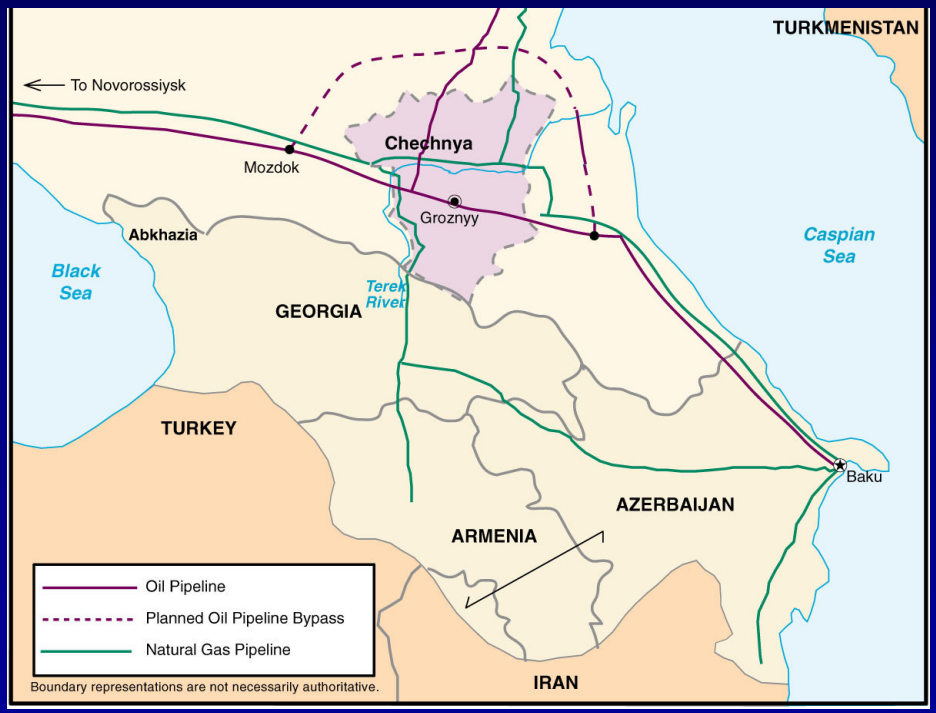
Russian FROG-7b

Chechnya ’99

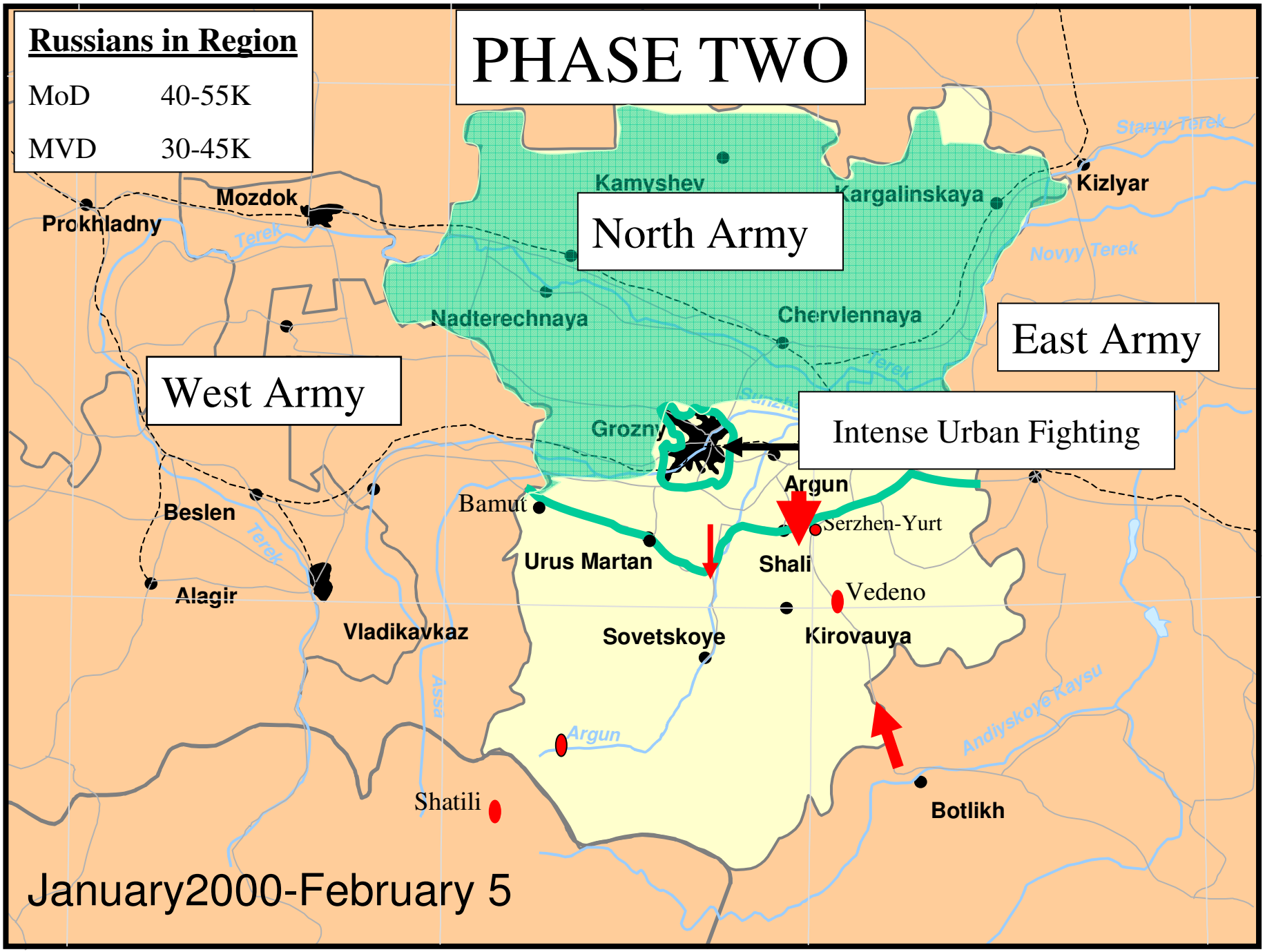
- OVERVIEW OF EVENTS
- BATTLEFIELD FUNCTIONS
- THE CHECHENS
- EVALUATION TO DATE

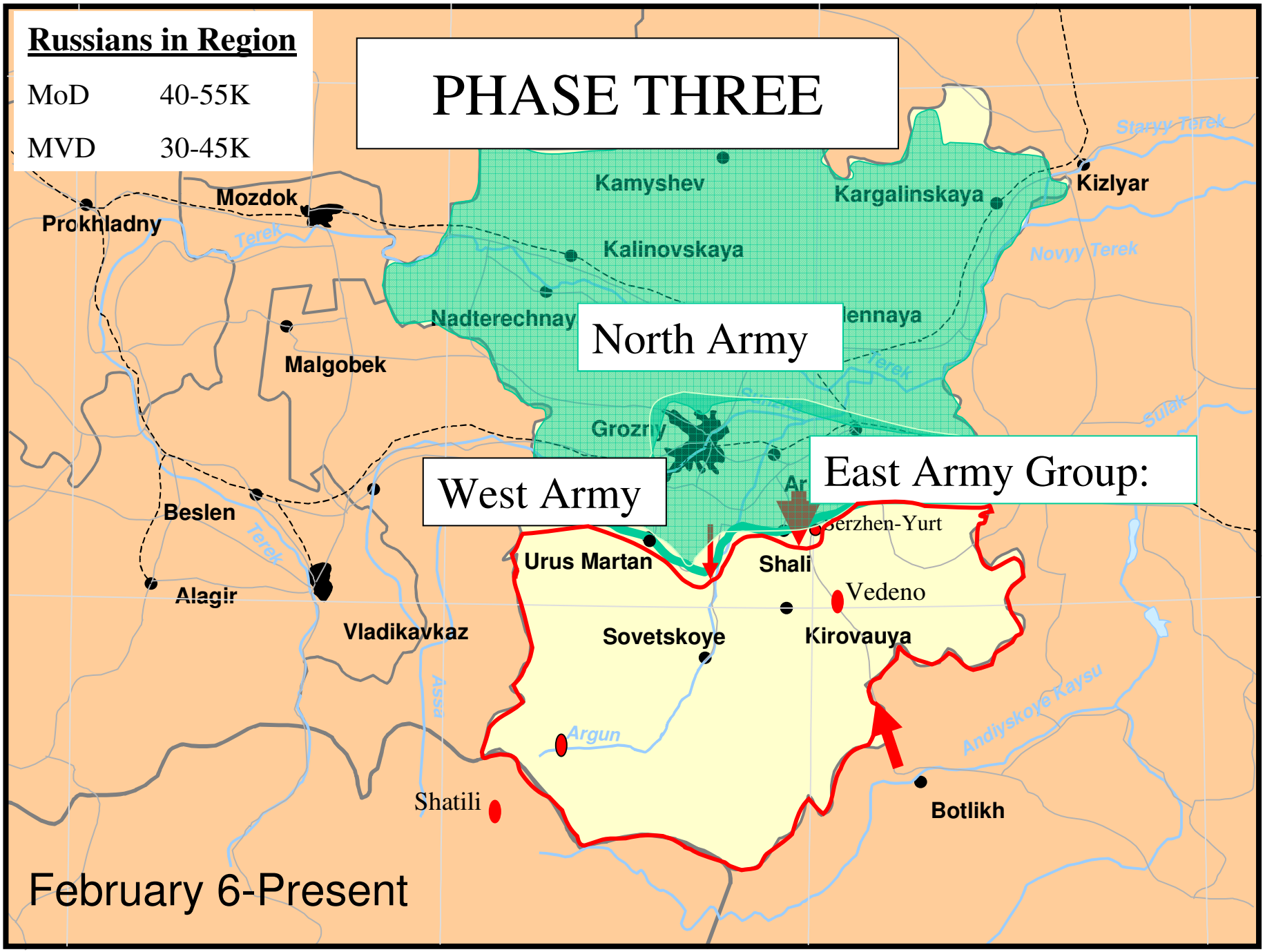
Why Chechnya 1999?

- Internal Security and the "Near Abroad" attitude concerning the satellites
- The military wants to avenge loss in 1996.
- Re-establish Russia as a legitimate superpower.
- Stabilize/control oil region.
- Fight "terrorism"
- Election year politics.



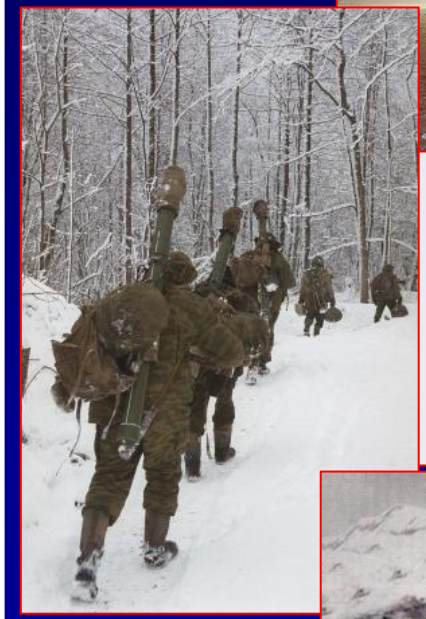
Russians in Region
MoD 40-55K
MVD 30-45K
PHASE ONE
North Army Group
Light Resistance
East Army
West Army Group
Kamyshev
Kargalinskaya
Kizlyar
Starvy Terek
Novyy Terek
Malgobek
Grozny
Gudermes
Khasavyurt
Sulak
Argun
Bamut
Serzhen-Yurt
Beslen
Terek
Urus Martan
Shali
Alagir
Vedeno
Vladikavkaz
Sovetskoye
Kirovauya
Assa
Argun
Andiyskoye Kaysu
Shatili
Botlikh
October-December 1999


Russians in Region
MoD 40-55K
MVD 30-45K
PHASE TWO
North Army
West Army
East Army
Intense Urban Fighting
Kamyshev
Kargalinskaya
Kizlyar
Starvy Terek
Novyy Terek
Mozdok
Prokhladny
Terek
Nadterechnaya
Chervlennaya
Grozny
Sunzha
Argun
Bamut
Serzhen-Yurt
Beslen
Urus Martan
Shali
Vedeno
Alagir
Vladikavkaz
Sovetskoye
Kirovauya
Assa
Argun
Andiyskoye Kaysu
Shatili
Botlikh
January2000-February 5


Russians in Region
MoD 40-55K
MVD 30-45K
PHASE THREE
Kamyshev
Kargalinskaya
Kizlyar
Starvy Terek
Novyy Terek
Mozdok
Prokhladny
Terek
Kalinovskaya
Nadterechnay
lennaya
North Army
Malgobek
Grozny
Sulak
East Army Group:
West Army
Beslen
Terek
Alagir
Vladikavkaz
Urus Martan
Shali
Vedeno
Sovetskoye
Kirovauya
Argun
Andiyskoye Kaysu
Assa
Shatili
Botlikh
February 6-Present

The Mountain Fight

UNCLASSIFED



Stavropol'
Dagestan
Kizlyar
Mozdok
NAURSKIY
SHELKOVSKIY
Chechnya
NADTERECHNIY
Tolstoy-Yurt
GROZNENSKIY
Dagestan
Ingushetiya
Gudermes
Groznyy
Argun
GUDERMESSKIY
Samashki
Nazran'
Khasavyurt
Achkhoy-Martan
Urus-Martan
SHALINSKIY
Vladikavkaz
Bamut
NOZHAY-YURTOVSKIY
Severnaya Osetiya-Alaniya (North Ossetia)
Vedeno
VEDENSKIY
ACHKHOY-MARTANOVSKIY
SHATOYSKIY*
ITUM-KALINSKIY*
GEORGIA
Republic or kray boundary
Rayon boundary
* Boundary between rayons unknown.
25 Kilometers
25 Miles
Unclassified
DI Cartography Center 751848AI (R01830) 12-99

RUSSIA
Krasnodar Kray
Kalmykiya
Novorossiysk
Stavropol Kray
Chechnya
KAZ.
Aqtau
Black Sea
Caspian Sea
Batumi
GEORGIA
Dagestan
Tbilisi
ARMENIA
Yerevan
AZERBAIJAN
Baku
TURKEY
IRAN

Current Situation

- Russia has re-captured Grozny
- Chechens quickly withdrew
- Grozny is in complete ruins
- 80% destruction in city center. City closed.
- Chechen civilian casualties unacceptable

Chechnya ’99

- RUSSIAN BATTLEFIELD FUNCTIONS IMPROVED
  - COMMAND, CONTROL COMMUNICATIONS AND INTELLIGENCE
  - SUPPORTING ARMS
  - INDIVIDUAL SOLDIER

C3I

- **1994-1996**
  - UNCLEAR CHAIN OF COMMAND
  - HASTY PLANNING (2 WKS)
  - COMMS: IN THE CLEAR WITH LITTLE TERRAIN APPRECIATION
  - POORLY TRAINED AND EMPLOYED RECON ASSETS
  - NO TACTICAL INTEL OR MAPS
- **1999**
  - BETTER COORDINATION BETWEEN SERVICES
  - DELIBERATE PLANNING
  - COVERED TACTICAL HF/VHF AND SATCOM
  - EFFECTIVE USE OF RECON FOR INTEL AND TARGETING (AIR AND GROUND)
  - HUMINT EFFORTS (CHECHEN MILITIA)

SUPPORTING ARMS

- **1994-1996**
  - ARTILLERY
    - SUPPORT MANEUVER
  - MLRS
    - BARRAGE
  - SRBMs
    - FEW LAUNCHES
  - FIXED-WING AIR
    - CARPET BOMBING WITH DUMB BOMBS
  - UAVs INTRODUCED
- **1999**
  - ARTILLERY
    - SUPPORTED BY MNVR
  - MLRS
    - CLOSE LOC/FASCAM/FAE
  - SRBMS
    - SCUD and SCARAB
  - FIXED WING vs ROTARY
    - AIR-GROUND COORD.
    - MEDEVAC/RESUPPLY
  - ENHANCED UAV

AIR POWER

- ROTORY WING
  - Mi-8 HIP
  - Mi-24 HIND
  - MEDEVAC
- FIXED WING
  - SU-24 FENCER
  - SU-25 FROGFOOT
- UAV
  - PHELA-II
- CAPABILITIES & TACTICS IMPROVED

MLRS

300mm SMERCH

Artillery

2S19 152mm

2S4 240MM Mortar

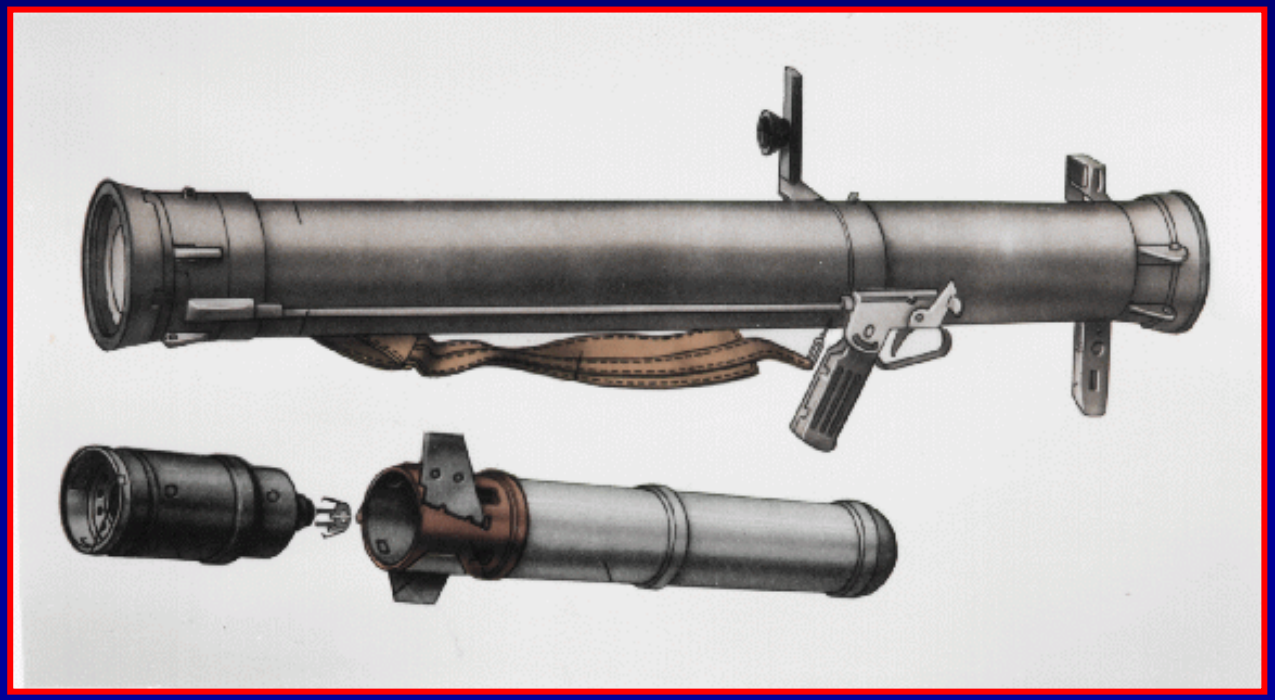
INDIVIDUAL SOLDIER

UNCLASSIFIED

RPO-A *Shmel*

(Rocket Propelled Infantry Flame thrower)

- Base detonating
- RDX Burster charge
- 2 kg of Isopropyl nitrate (IPN)



Shmel Con't

- Thermobaric, Nuclear, and Fuel-Air Explosive are the 3 types of volumetric weapons
- Thermobaric (heat & pressure) technology not fully attained by US Military. Attempts to duplicate thermobarics have only created a weapon less than ½ as effective
- Extremely lethal in enclosed areas, feared by Afghan rebels who call them "Satan Sticks."
- 100-600m range, simple to use, similar to US AT-4 84mm rocket

Shmel Con't

- Kills by causing massive damage to lungs and soft tissue
- High temperature of instantaneous fireball reaches 2000 degrees F; resulting is extremely destructive overpressure
- Existing body armor is ineffective against Shmel
- Detonation flash intensity causes temporary blindness

Shmel Con't

- One man operation
- Disposable -similar to SMAW
- Issued in 2-rocket pack
- Simple to operate & train with
- No maintenance; 8-10 year shelf-life?

INDIVIDUAL SOLDIER

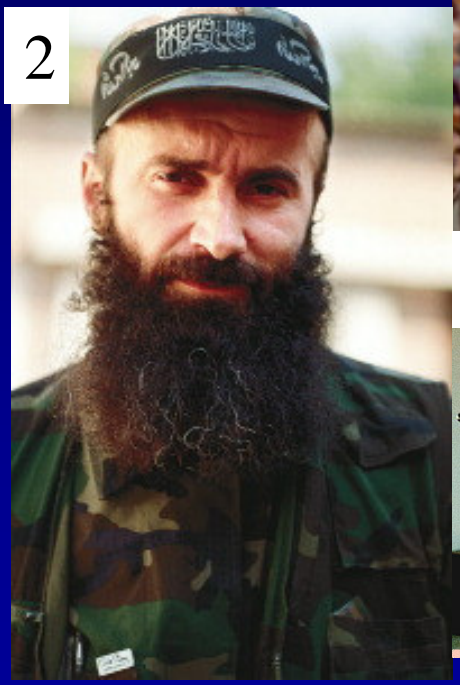
- **1994-1996**
  - NO COMBAT EXPERIENCE
  - NO APPLICABLE TRAINING
  - POOR LEADERSHIP
  - POOR MORALE AND DISCIPLINE
  - BRIGADE-SIZED UNITS
- **1999**
  - EXPERIENCE PASSED ON TO INCOMING TROOPS
  - MIN 6 MONTHS IN SERVICE NEEDED
  - NAVAL INFANTRY AND AIRBORNE EMPLOYMENT
  - SMALLER SPECIAL UNITS
  - INDIVIDUAL GEAR

Chechen Leaders

1. President Maskhadov
2. Shamil Basayev

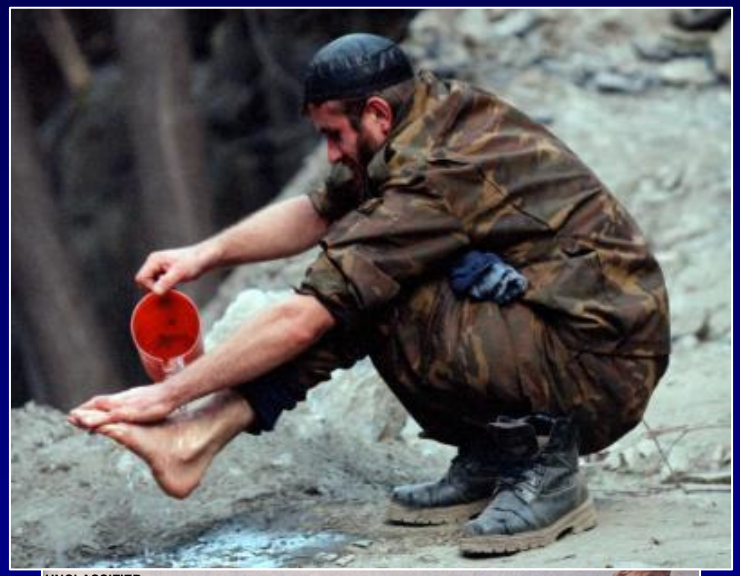
   3,000 in SE
3. Ruslan Gelayev

   2,000 in SW



Chechen Rebels: 1994 vs. 1999

- TACTICS
  - "IF IT AIN'T BROKE…"
  - CONTROL OF THE MEDIA
  - IDPs or "DIRTY BATTLEFIELD"
  - CHOOSE TIME AND PLACE OF FIGHT
  - TERRAIN AND WEATHER
  - TIME!!
- COMMAND AND CONTROL:
  - DECENTRALIZED
- WEAPONS:
  - CAPTURED/SMUGGLED
  - CHEMICAL
  - BOOBY TRAPS



Chechens With Stingers?

Or Chechen Deception?

#1: KNOWING THE ENEMY

FAILURE

#2: THE IDP PROBLEM

- ENVIRONMENT OF THE FUTURE
- SECURITY CONCERNS
- REPATRIATION
- PACIFICATION THROUGH DEPOPULATION
- FILTRATION

FAILURE

#3: TRAINING

- ALL RUSSIAN TROOPS UNDERSTOOD THE URBAN AND MOUNTAINOUS ENVIRONMENT
- CREATION OF URBAN TRAINING CENTER IN GROZNY AND MOUNTAIN WARFARE CENTER IN NORTH OSSETIA

  "MAKE FAVORABLE TERRAIN"

  "ON-GOING TRAINING"

  RUSSIAN NAVAL INFANTRY: "ROUND PEG, ROUND HOLE"

- FIRE SUPPORT TEAMS

RUSSIAN "PASS"

#4: INFORMATION OPS

- RUSSIAN PSYOPS
- MANAGING MEDIA
  - STRICT PRESS CONTROL
  - VIDEO DOCUMENTARY
- DESTRUCTION OF INFRASTRUCTURE
- COMSEC
- IO WILL BE A DOMINANT FACTOR

PASS

Russian Strategy

- Gain Domestic Support
- Destroy Chechen resistance
- End war quickly

Chechen Strategy

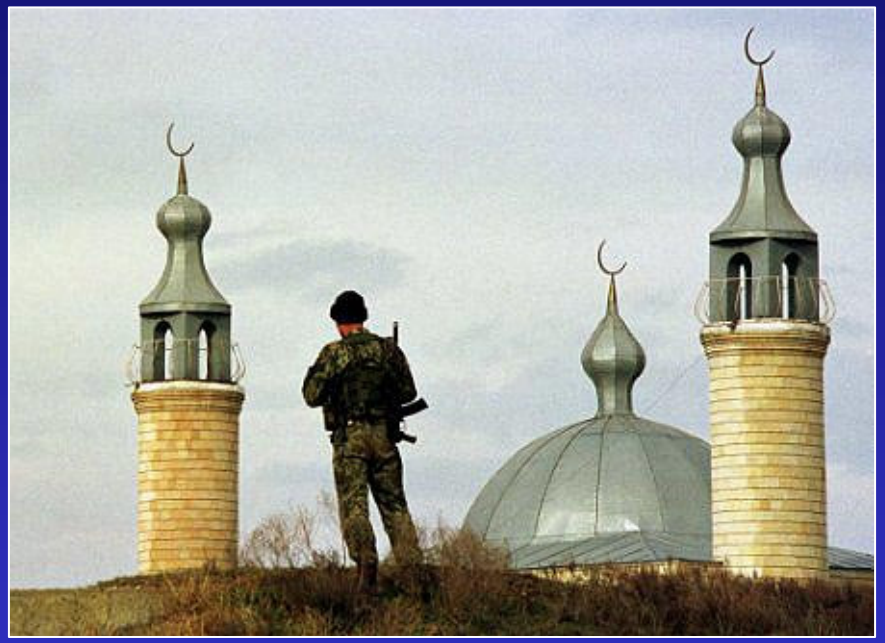
- Inflict Russian casualties
- Extend the conflict
- Attack in rear areas
- Choose the Terrain
- IO Campaign unsuccessful
- Terrorism: Basayev's Raid

The Greatest Lesson from Chechnya

- The key to victory in the streets of Grozny was the human will to fight
- The ability of troops to withstand long periods of intense combat in a chaotic environment with limited re-supply or rest
- Technology and equipment were secondary

Outlook

- Russian gains will only be temporary
- Chechens always regroup and counter-attack
- Russian will to fight limited; slave to politics
- Political solution unlikely
- MVD has difficult task of security
- RUSSIA SENDING A MESSAGE



USMC CONCERNS

1. Communications at the Squad/Fire Team level
2. Map/Imagery products: 1:12,500
3. Engineer Support Key
4. Night fighting
5. KNOW THE ENEMY
6. TRAINING
7. INFO OPS and impact on the modern battlefield
8. Proficiency in Mountainous Operations

9. Urban Reconnaissance and Surveillance

QUESTIONS?